

DISTRICT DIRT

SWAIN SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Fall 2019

We would like to thank you for taking the time to check out the Fall 2019 issue of District Dirt. Inside you will discover more about your Soil & Water Conservation District, how we can help you, and a brief overview of what we've been up to since the last issue in Spring 2019.

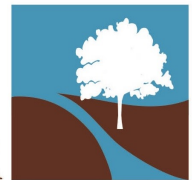


**Hay baling season in the
Alaska Community**
Photo by Creeden Kowal



Our Mission:
"To provide for a
quality environment and
higher standard of living
while protecting Swain
County's natural resources"

**SWAIN
SOIL &
WATER**
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



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Swain SWCD's First Intern, Mary Helmer

Fall semester at NC State is underway, which means Mary has completed her summer internship. This summer she has immersed herself in all things Soil & Water – she's been able to teach, participate in education and technical workshops, attend meetings, visit farms, and get familiar with all of our administrative tasks. She went above and beyond her duties by volunteering with us at the National Envirothon Competition, and she even developed the 2020-2025 Long-Range Plan for the District! Mary worked a total of 265 hours with us over the last few months and has also completed 34 hours to go towards her NC Environmental Education Certification.

At the August board meeting, Chairman, Mitchell Jenkins, presented Mary with a scholarship to commemorate the time she's spent with Swain SWCD this summer. She has been a wonderful addition to our crew and we will miss her. Mary, Swain SWCD wishes you the best of luck as you finish your environmental science degree at NC State and go on to do great things in your future career of Environmental Education!



Photo by Shelby Cook

Swain Soil & Water Conservation District Board Members



From left to right:
Avery Taylor,
Vice Chairman;
William Shuler,
Treasurer;
Cam Carson,
Member;
Phillip Carson, Sr.,
Member;
Mitchell Jenkins,
Chairman
Photo by
Shelby Cook

We couldn't ask for a more supportive board. They work hard to bring awareness to the importance of Swain County Agriculture through governing our conservation programs, sponsoring agricultural events, ensuring environmental educational opportunities and scholarships, and encouraging the Swain SWCD staff in all training activities. We thank you for all that you do!

Board meetings are open to the public and held every 2nd Monday at 9AM
at the USDA Service Center, 100 Brendle Street, Bryson City, NC.

Conservation Staff Serving Swain County

Swain Soil & Water Conservation District:

Creeden Kowal, District Director
Shelby Cook, Education Coordinator

Natural Resources Conservation Service:

Jeffrey Epps, District Conservationist
Amanda Buchanan, Soil Conservationist
Cayle Aldridge, Soil Cons. Technician

Farmland Preservation in Swain County

In 2009, the Swain County Board of Commissioners adopted an ordinance establishing the Farmland Preservation Program. The purpose of the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District (EVAD) Farmland Preservation Program is to encourage the preservation and protection of farmland from non-agricultural development. This is in recognition of the importance of agriculture to the economic and social wellbeing of North Carolina.

Here are the benefits: Farmers will have a greater voice in the affairs of county government by means of the Agricultural Advisory Board, which meets quarterly. There is increased protection from nuisance suits as a result of the requirement for notice of the presence of working farms in county land records. In addition, there is eligibility for

farmland preservation funds. Farms enrolled in the EVAD program may re-

ceive up to 25% of its gross sales from the sale of nonfarm products and still qualify as a bona fide farm that is exempt from zoning regulations. Also, participants are eligible to receive a higher percentage of cost share funds through conservation district programs.

Have you seen one of the signs pictured here to the left? These are proudly displayed by our Farmland Preservation Members. There are currently 8 farms, totaling 538 acres, in Swain County enrolled in the VAD/EVAD program. If you would like more information about the program, ask a board member, or contact the Swain Soil & Water Conservation District office at 828-488-2684 x3 or creeden.kowal@nc.nacdnet.net.



Quarterly Board Meetings at the USDA Service Center.

Agricultural Advisory Board:

William Shuler

Lee Boston

Jason Boston

Verna Kirkland

Harley Cunningham

Billy Dills

Rob Hawk, Ex-Officio

Shelby Cook, Clerk

Creeden Kowal, Staff

From Our Agricultural Archives



**“Hog Heaven”
in the Conley’s Creek
Community,
September 1976**

**Photo by
Swain Soil & Water
Conservation District**

Highlights from the Swain County Agricultural Fair



Ron Thurman, of the Ela Community, displays his antique tractor collection



Ethan Fortner offers free Wagon Rides



Award Winning, Dixie Darling Cloggers, kick off the entertainment for the day

Swain 4-Her Kendall Taylor showing her Award-Winning beef heifer



2nd Place Rabbit, Holland Lop Female



Sheep Poop Bingo hosted by the Swain 4-H Livestock Club. Sold out, twice!

Saturday, August 17th, 2019 marked the 3rd Annual Swain County Agricultural Fair! We had a jam packed day full of entertainment, exhibits, livestock shows, and more. Huge thanks to this year's sponsors: Swain County Government, Swain Farm Bureau, Swain TDA, Swain SWCD, Bryson City Vet, Carolina Farm Credit, Carolina Insurance Group, and Clampitt Ace Hardware; and also to our generous donors: A+ Portable Toilets, Tractor Supply, & The Coggins Family.

Planning is already underway for next year's fair. to participate as a vendor, exhibitor, entertainer, or just to help, contact Swain Soil & Water Conservation District at 828-488-2684 x 3 or Swain Extension 828-488-3848. We would love to have you join us!



Brought to you by:

NC Cooperative Extension—Swain
Swain Soil & Water Conservation District
Swain County High School FFA



[Facebook.com/swaincountyagriculturalfair](https://www.facebook.com/swaincountyagriculturalfair)

NC Agriculture Cost Share Program

Each year we assist landowners by helping make improvements to their farm through technical assistance and cost share assistance. Persons who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production on eligible land may participate in the cost-share program.

The District office encourages you to contact us or come visit our office and learn more about what assistance is available to you. We can always provide technical assistance, or advice, to get the most from your land!

Improvements, or best management practices (BMPs), to your property may include the following:

- Watering tanks
- Heavy Use Areas
- Agricultural roads
- Guttering
- Exclusion/Divisional Fencing
- Pasture Renovation
- Livestock trails
- Micro-irrigation
- Creek Crossings



How does cost-share work?

1. Qualified Landowners may apply through our office
2. We will evaluate your farm and recommend components to cost share on to best meet your environmental resource concerns and agricultural needs
3. Swain SWCD Board Members will review landowner applications while considering the needs of each landowner and district priorities
4. A technician will certify practice installation
5. A claim for payment, accompanied by proof of expenditures, will be filed by the landowner to the District Board Members after the project is completed
6. Claim will then be forwarded to the Division of Soil & Water Conservation for processing
7. You will receive your reimbursement and be responsible for maintaining the BMPs for 10 years

Applications for assistance can be submitted at any time, but the next ranking period is now through November 2019.

Call or come by to see if you qualify!

Swain/Jackson Agricultural Equipment Rental Program

Available through the Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District:

- Great Plains Seed Drill
- 2-Ton Lime Spreader

Call Barry Stevens at 828-586-5465
Prices vary including delivery/pickup.

Call the Swain Soil & Water Conservation District today for more info on any of the following:

- Frontier Cs1360 Conservation Seeder
\$40 per day, plus tax
- Rhino Ranch Pro T-Post Driver (free)
- High-Tensile Spooler (free)
- Wove-Wire Stretcher & Come-Along (free)
- Rotational Grazing Kit including: solar charger, polytape, stakes (free)
- We also sell 4oz non-woven filter cloth: pre-cut width of 12.5 ft, any length available. Price: \$1.20 per square yard

All proceeds from this program fund District sponsored educational events and scholarships!

Swain Conservation Seeder
Photo by Amanda Buchanan



Conservation Education Programs



On September 25th, Swain SWCD will host the annual Future Farmers of America Land Judging Career Development Event at Darnell Farms in Bryson City. The purpose of the land judging event is for FFA students to learn how to measure and identify the capability of the soil for development or agriculture. It is great practice for the regional and state competitions. This is a free event and all FFA teams in Western North Carolina are welcome to participate! The registration deadline is September 13th and teams should RSVP to 828-488-2684 x3 or Shelby.Cook@swaincountync.gov.



After receiving a \$65,800 grant from the NC Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, Swain County High School and Swain SWCD are partnering to build a new FFA livestock facility at Swain High. Site preparation is underway, and the school's carpentry program is working on construction plans for the building. Pictured right is Swain SWCD and Swain County Schools staff during the groundbreaking ceremony held this spring.

Contact Shelby, Education Coordinator, for more information or to participate in any of Swain SWCD's education programs! 828-488-2684 x3 or Shelby.Cook@swaincountync.gov



Join us for the 2019 FFA Land Judging Career Development Event!

Wednesday, September 25 at 1:00 PM
Darnell Farms
2300 Governors Island Rd
Bryson City, NC 28713

To register: Call 828-488-2684 x3 or email shelby.cook@swaincountync.gov
Deadline to register: September 13, 2019
*This is a free event!



Swain SWCD was honored to help sponsor and to volunteer at the 2019 NCF-Envirothon competition held in Raleigh, NC on July 28th-August 2nd. Teams from all over the USA, Canada, and China came to participate. Virginia came in first place, North Carolina brought home second, and Pennsylvania came in third.

Pictured left are all of the teams, advisors, and volunteers during the "fun day" trip to Atlantic Beach.

OUR HISTORY

Soil and Water Conservation Districts were formed across the country as a method of addressing soil erosion on cropland during the Dust Bowl Era of the 1930's. Swain County is one of 96 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in North Carolina. The country's very first Soil and Water Conservation District, the Brown Creek SWCD in Anson County, was formed in North Carolina in 1937. In 1957, the Tuckaseegee Soil and Water Conservation District was formed in Swain County. However, in 1982 the Tuckaseegee Soil and Water Conservation District transformed into the Swain SWCD.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts encourage the sound use and management of our natural resources: soil, water, air, plants, and animals. The Swain Soil and Water Conservation District's objectives are secured largely through voluntary cooperation of landowners. This cooperation enables the District to offer technical assistance and resources to landowners and operators by planning, executing, and promoting sound conservation practices offered through the North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program and other grant opportunities to assist landowners with conservation practices and their land.

The District works closely with the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA, NRCS) and the Division of the Soil and Water Conservation Department, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS).

Swain Soil & Water Conservation District's mission is to provide for a quality environment and higher standard of living while protecting Swain County's natural resources.



**Learn more &
stay updated by
following us online:**

[www.swaincountync.gov/soil/
soil-water-conservation-district-
home.html](http://www.swaincountync.gov/soil/soil-water-conservation-district-home.html)



facebook.com/swainswcd



[@SwainSWCD](https://www.instagram.com/SwainSWCD)

...or come see us!

**USDA Service Center
100 Brendle Street
Bryson City, NC 28713**

828.488.2684 x3

Shelby.Cook@swaincountync.gov
Creeden.Kowal@nc.nacdnet.net